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1883



THE RAVEN

BY

EDGAR ALLEN POE---1845,

with eighteen additional verses by

SAMUEL L. RUFFNER---1883.

MORRILTON, ARKANSAS.

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P is before Poe's verses, R before Ruffner's.

- P-- Once upon a midnight dreary,
While I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious
Volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping,
Suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping,
Rapping at my chamber door.
"Tis some visitor," I muttered,
"Tapping at my chamber door—
Only this, and nothing more."
- R-- And yet I felt chagrined and worried
At taps by which my dream was flurried:
Untimely taps my thoughts had hurried
From bright Elysian shore.
"No friend," said I, "could be so rude.
As to thus unseasonably intrude
At midnight's sacred solitude,
By rapping at my chamber door.
No good friend would thus go tapping,
Tapping at his neighbor's door,
Unless important news he bore."
- R-- "I'm sure," said I, "'tis not a ghost,
For of such thing I love to boast
My non-belief, as all men do,
When talking of specters hoar.
Such dreadful things my blood ne'er chill,
Pale phantom forms my mind ne'er fill,
Nor moves my pulse to quicker thrill:—
I'm not nervous on that score,—
Tho, others quake at goblins grim,
I'm solid on that score—
Staunch and solid to the core,"
- R-- Though fear, my words did not betoken.
A band of doubts had been awoken
That would not down, but jeered and mocked
My self-assuring "nothing more."
With pointed shafts my breast they darted,
While from my restful chair I started,
Two steps or more the chair I parted,
And stood midway the chamber floor.
The wild winds around the gables
Dirges of my dead Hope bore—
That said in mournful moans, "Lenore,
Lenore."
- P-- Ah, distinctly I remember,
It was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember
Wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—
Vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—
Sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For that rare and radiant maiden
Whom the angels name "Lenore"—
To dwell here for evermore.

- P— And the silken, sad, uncertain
Rustling of each purple curtain—
Thrilled me,—filled me with fantastic
Terrors, never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating
Of my heart, I stood repeating,
"Tis some visitor entreating
Entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating
Entrance at my chamber door:—
This it is, and nothing more."
- P— Presently my soul grew stronger;
Hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly
Your forgiveness I implore:
But the fact is I was napping,
And so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping,
Tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you."—
Here I opened wide the door;—
Darkness there, and nothing more.
- P— Deep into that darkness peering,
Long I stood there, wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal
Ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken,
And the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken
Was the whispered word, "Lenore!"
This I whispered, and an echo
Murmured back the word, "Lenore!"
Merely this, and nothing more.
- P— Back into the chamber turning,
All my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping,
Something louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely, that is
Something at my window lattice;
Let me see then, what thereat is,
And this mystery explore;—
Let my heart be still a moment,
And this mystery explore;
'Tis the wind, and nothing more."
- R— Stepping quickly to the window
So that distance might not hinder
Me to hearing to advantage
What was going on out door,—
All ghosts of childish dread I cast
Out of my soul, then unabashed,
I boldly raised the lower sash,
Quicker than I'd ever done before.
With eager ear against the shutter,
I listened, as I'd not before,—
Naught hearing but the winds sad roar.
- P— Open here I flung the shutter,
When, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven
Of the saintly days of yore;
Not the least obeisance made he;
Not a minute stopped or stayed he.
But, with mien of lord or lady,
Perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas,
Just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.
- P— Then this ebony bird beguiling
My sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum
Of the countenance he wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven;
"Thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly, grim, and ancient Raven,
Wandering from the nightly shore,
Tell me what thy lordly name is
On the night's Plutonian shore?"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

- P— Much I marvel'd this ungainly
Fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—
Little relevancy bore ;
For we cannot help agreeing
That no living human being
Ever yet was blest with seeing
Bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured
Bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."
- R— Marveling still, yet somewhat fearing
A freakish jest or faulty hearing,
Upon my part, had deceived my
Sense or ears with "nevermore"—
"Please sir," said I, "let me intreat
You, upon honor, to repeat
Your lordly name complete,—
I may have heard it wrong before,—
Jest not, good sir, nor alias give,
As I fear you did before."
He gravely answered—"Nevermore."
- R— "Nevermore, so clear, without confusion
Of sound, or ought to cause illusion,"
I said, in measured syllables
Repeated gravely o'er,
"I'm sure none but a merry andrew
Would dub his bird with such a slander.
It seems he had a mind to pander
To things we should ignore,
My feathered friend, there are some things
'Tis best we should ignore."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."
- R— "Nevermore." I said, with smile, aside,
"He seems to take a wondrous pride—
That clumsy, whimsic, woeful name
Of his, in telling o'er and o'er.
If your master were a poet,
Your christening doth sadly show it:
If, good sir, you did but know it,
You'd cease to tell it o'er and o'er;
If you but knew it were unhandsome,
You'd cease to tell it o'er and o'er."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."
- R— "Just there," said I, "in that connection,
Your 'Nevermore' is most perplexing,
And hath a dubious meaning
Unlike it had before.
Do you mean by such replying
To give an answer signifying
An emphatical denying
My conclusions on that score?
Do you mean, that in future, you'll
Not heed my counsel on that score?"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."
- R— "People differ in opinion,
'Specially in Taste's dominion:
Some love the sad, the odd or rule;
Some love æsthetics bright glamour.
If 'nevermore' be no misnomer,
I fear whoever be your owner
Is crude in taste, or chronic mourner,
In need of cheerful Hope's glamour.
May you and he be happy yet,
And dazed by cheer Hope's glamour."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."
- R— "Hope from the box of old Pandora,
With face as fair as bright Arora,
Is left to us, to cheer in times
Of loss, with promise to restore.
Arora, fair daughter of the dawn,
Opens the golden gates of morn:—
Hopes plucks from wounded heart the
thorn,
And heals the bleeding sore;—
Pluto before Arora flies;
Hope heals the bleeding sore."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore,"

R- "Nevermore," he spoke it well,
 But in that tone a mournful knell
 Of departed joys, there seemed, that thrilled
 The chords about my own heart's core.
 "Perhaps," said I, "he, too, hath sorrow,
 And hopes not for a happy morrow,
 But only seeks my room to borrow
 Shelter above my chamber door.
 He cares less for my happiness
 Than for that perch above the door."
 Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

P- But the Raven, sitting lonely
 On the placid bust, spoke only
 That one word, as if his soul in
 That one word he did outpour.
 Nothing farther then he uttered,
 Not a feather then he fluttered,
 Till I scarcely more than muttered.
 "Other friends have flown before—
 On the morrow he will leave me,
 As my Hopes have flown before."
 Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

P- Startled at the stillness broken
 By reply so aptly spoken,
 "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters
 Is its only stock and store,
 Caught from some unhappy master,
 Whom unmerciful Disaster
 Followed fast and followed faster,
 Till his songs one burden bore—
 Till the dirges of his Hope that
 Melancholy burden bore,
 Of 'Never——nevermore.'"

P- But the Raven still beguiling
 All my sad soul into smiling,
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in
 Front of bird, and bust, and door;
 Then, upon the velvet sinking,
 I betook myself to linking
 Fancy into fancy, thinking
 What this ominous bird of yore—
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly,
 Gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
 Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

P- This I sat engaged in guessing,
 But no syllable expressing
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now
 Burned into my bosom's core;
 This and more I sat divining,
 With my head at ease reclining
 On the cushion's velvet lining
 That the lamp-light gloated o'er,
 But whose velvet, violet lining,
 With the lamp-light gloating o'er
 Sure shall press, ah, nevermore.

R- Just then there seemed an apparition—
 A half defined and spectral vision
 Within the Raven's ominous shadow,
 Athwart my chamber floor,
 With fixed gaze I bended forward;—
 It took the form of one I sorrowed,—
 A loved ones form my soul had sorrowed
 Since she had gone to yonder shore.
 "Enchantress of my soul," I cried:
 "Hast thou returned from yonder shore?"
 Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

R- But soon that radiant phantom vanished,
 While from my breast fond Hope was
 banished
 Like summer bird, when winter comes,
 Far flown to happier shore.
 Then darker grew the silhouette gloaming
 Of pallid bust, and bird of mourning;
 And the heart sighed deeper moaning,
 Afront that shadow on my chamber floor.
 That weird and direful, ominous
 Shadow, athwart my chamber floor,—
 And doleful croak of "Nevermore."

R— Then death-like stillness reigned supreme;
An awing solitude there seemed;—

A ghastly, horror-haunted scene,
That never, never would give o'er.
My pulse was beating quick and wild,
Like throbbing heart of frightened child,
And on my pallid brow, the while
Were beads of watery gore.
The Raven eyed my features sharp
With beads of watery gore,
Then weirdly uttered, "Nevermore."

P— Then, methought, the air grew denser,
Perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim, whose footfalls
Tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee,
By these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe,
From thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe,
And forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

R— "That word," said I, "is fraught with
meaning,
Profound beyond its simple seeming,—
A very talisman, perhaps,
Of deep, prophetic lore.
But whilst the Raven seems a friend,
His 'Nevermore' doth have a trend
Toward prophecy of dark portend,
Revealed through mystic lore.
I'll have him tell my destiny
By his quaint and mythic lore,
Brought from the classic yore."

R— If bird or beast e'er privilege found
Of gaining knowledge beyond the bound
Of common things, the Raven
Did, on Jordan's sacred shore :
For there, we're told, the Ravens fed
The seer, Elijah, wanting bred,
"Twere natural he should touch each head
With wand of his prophetic lore.
It seemeth natural he would
Verse them in prophetic lore,
As bird had ne'er been versed before.

P— "Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—
Prophet still, if bird or devil!—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether
Tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate, yet all undaunted,
On this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—
Tell me truly, I implore—
Is there—is there balm in Gilead?
Tell me—tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

R— We lay sweet unction to the soul;
'Tis human like when we are told
By prophecy of something great
And good for us in store;
But when answer to our query
Takes a form that's dark and dreary,
Because prophetic, it just queerly
Tells, or means there's good in store.
We take the answer by contraries,
And claim it means there's good in store;
Yet not content we query more.

P— "Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil,—
Prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that heaven that bends above us,
By that God we both adore,
Tell this soul with sorrow laden,
If, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden,
Whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden,
Whom the angels name Lenore?"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

P— “Be that word our sign of parting,
 Bird or fiend, I shrieked, upstarting ;
 “Get the back into the tempest
 And the night’s Plutonian shore !
 Leave no black plume as a token
 Of that lie thy soul hath spoken !
 Leave my loneliness unbroken !
 Quit the bust above my door !
 Take thy beak from out my heart and
 Tade thy form from off my door !”
 Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

P— And the Raven, never fliting
 Still is sitting, still is sitting
 On the pallid bust of Pallas,
 Just above my chamber door;
 And his eyes have all the seeming
 Of a demon’s that is dreaming,
 And the lamp-light o’er him streaming,
 Throws his shadow on the floor;
 And my soul from out that shadow,
 That lies floating on the floor,
 Shall be lifted—nevermore !

R— “Nevermore”!—Despairs refrain,—
 There’s good in store,”—Hope cries amain
 “And the soul from out that shadow
 Shall to brighter realms soar.”
 Life’s a drama fraught with meaning,
 Whose dark shadows, to our seeming,
 May be gems of brightest gleaming
 Upon some sunnier shore,
 And ray the brow and soul with
 Jewels, upon some sunnier shore,
 Whose glory fadeth—nevemore.

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